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CONTENTS.

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CONTENTS.

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A

DISCOURSE

DELIVERED IN

THE FIRST CHURCH, BROOKLINE,

On Fast Day, Sept. 26, 1861.

BY REV. F. H. HEDGE, D.D.

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SERMON.

"LET NOT HIM THAT GIRDETH ON HIS HARNESS BOAST HIMSELF AS HE THAT PUTTETH IT OFF." — 1 Kings xx. 11.

WHEN President Lincoln, five months ago, put forth his Proclamation, announcing a combination against the laws of the land too powerful to be suppressed by ordinary methods, and calling for seventy-five thousand troops to meet this exigency, there mingled, with the grief and indignation awakened in us by the treason which necessitated such an appeal, a thrill of patriotic joy at this demonstration of a new energy on the part of Government, after so many months of passive submission. We gloried in the prospect of a speedy solution of our national difficulties by a vigorous assertion of the Federal authority. Our spirits, which had settled into sullen gloom, almost despair of our country's future, were raised to a pitch of jubilant expectation, as we felt, through all our bones, the shock of national consciousness which that manifesto communicated to the loyal States.

The States were not slack in acknowledging the appeal. Massachusetts, true to her historical primacy, with promptness worthy her illustrious pedigree, re-

sponded to the call. Her Governor's word gave back the President's like its echo; a regiment of her sons, equipped and on the march in less than six days, was the echo to that; and a second 19th of April, dated with her blood, initiated and auspicated the new conflict. The seventy-five thousand were mustered and sent; and to these were added as many more. Our hearts were established: we were not afraid. The prevalent expectation was, that a three-months' campaign would suffice, if not to heal all difficulties, and reinstate the shattered Union, at least to crush the power of the rebels, and make it impossible for them to pursue their disorganizing course and to carry out their nefarious design.

So we girded on our harness with some boasting. With what result? The three-months' campaign, inaugurated with so much enthusiasm, after some less important engagements, terminated with the battle of Bull Run.

The three months expired, — five months have elapsed, — and the rebel power is still unsubdued. "The harvest is past, the summer is ended, and we are not saved." The rebels are not crushed, nor even so weakened as yet to despair of final success, or to manifest the least inclination to recede from their position. So far as they are weakened at all, it is by want of means, by their straitened economy and financial embarrassment, and not by the triumphs of the Federal arms. The Federal arms have not triumphed in any important engagement, except when opposed in overwhelming force to a weak resistance on the part of the enemy.

And, although the disaster at Bull Run cannot be regarded as a victory on the part of the rebels, it added greatly to their confidence, and therefore to their strength; while it terribly rebuked our own overweening confidence in ourselves, and proved to us how little enthusiasm and patriotic determination will avail, without military discipline, — without wise conduct, prudence, and self-control. An army of brave men, — for such unquestionably they were, — by mere conceit of approaching danger, not real, imminent peril, overtaken with a panic which dissolves all bonds of military organization, almost of human fellowship, and converts a body of warriors into a herd of frightened deer, flying at the top of their speed when none pursued, never halting to ascertain whether any just cause existed for their alarm, utterly bereft of counsel and reason, and given over to a passion of insane terror, — this, after all the noisy demonstrations, the congratulations and harangues, the receptions and parades, which solemnized the setting forth of these hosts, though not an uncommon occurrence in war, and though no worse than a hundred panics recorded in history, is still a shame and a tragedy, which sadly illustrates the difference there is between promise and performance, between girding on and putting off.

Meanwhile, the pirates of the new Confederacy, in defiance of the public sentiment of Christendom, are pursuing their prey, and snatching their plunder, on all our seas. Hundreds of vessels, with large amounts of value, have been seized by these bold buccaneers, who have thus far eluded all attempts to arrest their career.

Such, then, is our position at the present time. With vast resources and superabundant strength at our disposal, we have not as yet, for want of headship, of adequate organization, unity of purpose, and harmony of counsel, succeeded in applying those resources and that strength with decisive effect. The enemy in our borders, whom a well-directed effort might crush into dust, is still unsubdued, undaunted, — still mocks us through our own indirection. The fact is humiliating, and, like all humiliations, a salutary lesson to such as are willing to be instructed by it, — a lesson of weakness which it much concerns us to lay to heart. As a nation, we are proudly conscious of our strength: it were well we understood our weakness also, our national infirmities and faults. Of some of these, I propose now to speak.

One element of weakness is our self-conceit, — the vain-glorious persuasion that we are, on the whole, the greatest people and the wisest that ever occupied the earth with their labors, or tracked it with their foot-prints. One can pardon some degree of self-importance to a great and prosperous nation: I suppose there never was one without it. Let a people think well of their ability, and cherish a high sense of their providential mission. We accept it as a sign of national health. But let the conceit bear some proportion to the fact, and let it respect the national calling rather than the national merit; else it is a sign of morbid development, great superficial expansion, with no proportionate increase of substance. We Americans not only arrogate to ourselves a great destiny, in which, if we are true to our

opportunities, we may be right; but we boast of great doings, in which we are certainly wrong. We confound prosperity with merit; we mistake a growth which is partly due to natural laws, partly to rare opportunities, and partly to a certain shiftiness of constitution, for a proof of greatness; we plume ourselves on our expansion; we give ourselves airs on the strength of a rapid, perhaps unexampled, increase of population, and a corresponding success in trade. When I hear such boasts, I cannot help recalling what an English cynic says of our pretensions: "Brag not yet of our American cousins. Their quantity of cotton, dollars, industry, and resources, I believe to be almost unspeakable. But I can by no means worship the like of these. What great human soul, what great thought, what great noble thing, that one could worship or loyally admire, has yet been produced there? None! The American cousins have done none of these things."

I cannot help remembering, that the little republic of Athens, while yet in its youth, with its limited territory, population, and means, produced, within a century after the Persian wars, the immortal works which are still the chief boast of letters and art; and, what is more, the immortal men whom the world still honors as little less than divine. The most that we can say of ourselves is, that we have occupied a large territory with our civilization, such as it is, and invented some ingenious contrivances for the expedition of business, and the merely mechanical intercourse of life. Mechanical ingenuity, directed to material ends, is, thus far, our chief distinction as a people. And even here our merit is not

supreme. The steamship is a great addition to the sum of human means; but the ship itself, which preceded it, was incomparably greater. The electric telegraph is a cunning invention; but the art of writing, about which little noise was made at the time, was a greater advance in civilization, and a greater blessing to mankind.

The real and most important achievement, and therefore the true test of a nation, is the national character. Tried by this standard, the American people can claim no pre-eminent rank among the nations. Here our weakness is painfully evident. It is true, the national character is not yet fully developed, and must not be too severely judged. True it is also, that the national character has many excellent and noble qualities, among which I may mention generosity, kindliness, and daring. But these are offset by fatal defects. Chief among these is a certain looseness which pervades the intellectual and moral life of the nation, debilitating its mental capacity, and vitiating all its action.

Intellectually, this trait appears in the superficiality, the crudeness, the want of discipline, of thorough and effective training, which characterize American life; and are due, in part, to the very constitution of our republican society, in which the facilities afforded for a certain kind of success, the chance of a prosperous career, to mere self-assertion, with little or no culture, and no laborious preparation of any kind, tend to lessen the demand for thorough education, and consequently reduce its standard and restrict its means. Where a hasty education will suffice for social and political success, the greater part will seek no other. To an Ame-

rican, the last criterion of merit, and the supreme mark of his calling, is to get the most votes; and, in this, it is not the best educated that succeed best, but the most unscrupulous and the most importunate. Accordingly, our public men, as a general rule, are worse educated, worse trained, and worse mannered, than those of any other civilized nation. A thoroughly taught and cultivated American gentleman is proverbially a rare phenomenon, and nowhere more so than in public life. The men who represent us in the courts of Europe, represent, too often and too faithfully, our ignorance and ill-breeding. With no knowledge of the language of the country to which they are sent, or of French (the language of courts), with no tincture of polite or diplomatic learning, with no one qualification for the post they occupy but the service rendered in procuring the election of the chief who sends them, they seem rather to have been accidentally cast ashore in those strange lands, than delegated thither as the plenipotentiaries of a great nation. There are splendid exceptions, I know, extending through all our history, — instances like those of Irving, Wheaton, Everett, Bancroft, and that of the accomplished ambassador who now represents us at the court of Vienna; but such has been the prevailing type. How, indeed, can it be otherwise? How should we be better abroad than at home? The representation is according to the constituency. The same want of thoroughness appears in the home-departments of State, whose incumbents are mostly and grossly deficient in knowledge and tact, equal to no exigency requiring brain and heart instead of routine.

A great crisis like the present finds them incompetent and unprepared.

Viewed in its moral aspects, the looseness of which I speak is manifest in the want of reverence and subordination, which forms so conspicuous a trait of our nationality, and proves, at the present juncture, so serious an obstacle in our military operations. The American is not taught by the genius of the civil polity under which he lives, as other nations are by theirs, to respect and obey his superiors. On the contrary, the lesson he learns from his political experience is, that he has no superiors, — a lesson of equality, which, unless counteracted by domestic training or corrected by his own good sense, he is apt to interpret as a right to his own way in every condition and relation of life: a principle of action utterly incompatible with military discipline. It is difficult for him to admit the idea of a superior, much more to submit himself with unquestioning obedience to one who is placed in authority over him. Subordination is the first and fundamental principle, not only of military organization, but of social order. This lesson the American citizen has yet to learn; and, if the war shall serve to enforce it, it will prove a providential school of a very important civil virtue, as well as of a moral and Christian grace.

The same looseness appears in the moral indifference, which, not content with mitigating, has gone far to abolish, the criminal code, or the application of it in practice; which overlooks the gravest transgressions in public men, if associated with popular qualities; which tolerates bankruptcy of the most aggravated and fraud-

ulent kind as a mercantile mishap, not compromising the social position of the offender; — an indifference to which the audacious filibuster is as worthy a hero as Scott or Kane; and which views criminality in general rather as an interesting variety of human nature, than as damnable guilt. Suppose our national difficulties settled, the rebellion suppressed, the Union restored: I fear that the leader in this conspiracy, whose crime against this country is unsurpassed in the annals of treason, so far from receiving his deserts on the gallows, would become the popular hero of the day. Should he visit the loyal States, I fear he would be received with public honors, and would be as likely as another to be elected President of the United States. We may certainly claim, as a people, the merit of extraordinary freedom from vindictiveness; but we must also plead guilty to a most extraordinary degree of moral indifference.

One other element of national weakness I will mention; and that is our present system of political administration, which has come to be a regular quadrennial revolution, extending through all the departments of State, and including every Federal office in the land. No sooner has any functionary become sufficiently versed in the duties of his station to discharge them with credit to himself and with profit to the nation, than immediately he is ejected, and his place supplied by a novice, who, mindful of the brief and precarious tenure of his position, is chiefly intent on making the most that can be made, in the way of pecuniary gain, of the opportunities it affords. The mischief arising from this source is incalculable. Not only are character and talent of

the highest order almost necessarily excluded from the service of the State by a system which makes office the reward of successful demagogism, but a lottery is opened with each Presidential term to hungry adventurers, whose only idea of office is that of a prize in the game of politics, with opportunity of plunder. If occasionally men of the better sort, who might excel in some honorable calling, are tempted by the hope of political preferment to mix in this arena, they do so at the expense of their morals or their time; for this is a race in which merit, self-respect, and scrupulous integrity, are sure to be distanced by importunity, chicanery, and brazen-faced impudence. Can they condescend to tamper with electors, and to foul their hands with low intrigue? If not, let them stand aloof from the game, and renounce all hope of success in that direction. This is a system which throws to the surface the dregs of our American civilization, and opens an impassable gulf between merit and political eminence. The present century has witnessed a steady decline in the character of our public men. Where shining ability and high-minded patriotism were once the rule, they have come to be the exception. To the Jeffersons, the Adamses, and Clays, has succeeded a race of jobbers and hack politicians. Such are the results of this deplorable system of quadrennial rotation in office. This has made us, with all our prosperity, our rapid growth, and extended commerce, a byword and a hissing among the nations.

Since the throne of the world was sold at auction to the highest bidder, there has been nothing in its way so base as American politics. So demoralizing, so disor-

ganizing, is the tendency of this system, that even the rupture of the Union, at the prospect of which we startle and are now so distressed, could bring us nothing worse than our own chosen and established methods were all these years preparing for us. All this must be reformed, or we slide to inevitable ruin, from which, hitherto, our ample territory and vast material resources alone have saved us. The quarrel between North and South which now agitates the land is but an anticipation of (unless it shall prove, as I trust it may, our deliverance from) greater evils that were threatening us before this outbreak, and that must have arrived, independently of the present crisis, by the natural termination of the course we were pursuing. We were rushing, with a speed unexampled in the history of nations, to the civil dissolution which precedes despotism in the natural order of history. The war now enkindled by sectional conflicts, with all the evil and miseries attending it, will prove, in the end, the greatest of blessings, if it serves to arrest this downward tendency; if it opens our eyes to our political errors and vices, and puts us in the way of reforming them; if it raises to the supreme power a truly wise and independent man, with an eye to discern what is needful, and strength of will, in spite of precedent and popular clamor, to enforce it, — a man who, without respect to party, shall put the right men in the right places; retaining the competent and faithful of former administrations, and fearlessly ejecting the incompetent of his own; and whose influence, backed by Congress and the nation, shall avail to make that practice the law of the land. I see no salvation for this people, no

way of redemption from political ruin, until the principle is established of permanence in offices whose term is not prescribed by the Constitution, nor necessarily affected by the exigencies of State, — a permanence limited only by the competence and good behavior of the incumbent. Such a system of administration would tend to make office no longer the reward of electioneering and the prize of demagogues, but the fit investment of intellectual and moral worth; it would tend to take the affairs of State out of the hands of jobbers and pettifoggers and bar-room politicians, and commit them to those who are equal to the trust; it would tend to stop the mouths of the orators of the stump, to abate the nuisance of the popular harangue, and to purify the national speech; it would make the annual and quadrennial elections a safe and peaceable process, instead of the hurly-burly it now is, inflaming the passions, setting friend against friend, dividing households, and imbittering all the intercourse of life; it would help to do away with this periodical Walpurgis, this uncovering of the hells of wrath and strife; and, finally, it would make politics with us what they are in other lands, — a science of civil and international relations, instead of a trade and a trick, which none can be concerned in and not be defiled; it would give us counsellors instead of speculators; magistrates whom we can sincerely respect, instead of available ciphers; and make, in the good old Bible phrase, "our rulers peace, and our exactors righteousness."

I shall not speak of slavery in connection with this subject of the national weakness; not because I do not feel it to be the great weakness of the land, — the

head and front of our offending, but because the subject has been so thoroughly discussed as to need no comment of mine, and, at present, no further ventilation. Those who do not see it to be the crowning evil of our polity are not likely to be converted by any illustration which I can give it.

The faults and vices I have named, if not the immediate cause of our troubles, are yet, in so far as the head and heart and hand of the nation have been weakened and its action vitiated by them, the true source of the mortifications, the disappointments, and all the bitter experiences, of this year of sorrows. God grant these experiences — "his chastisements," as our Chief Magistrate calls them — may work in us the good work of discipline and reform, — may open our eyes and bring back our hearts to forsaken truth and violated law! — that we may learn wisdom and learn obedience by the things we suffer, and rise from the humiliation of this affliction, a purified people, "zealous of good works."

And now, fellow-citizens, it befits us to consider what is needful and good for the present distress. Here we are, committed to a war whose term no mortal can predict, whose issues defy all human calculation; a war which will cost us hundreds of millions of money, and, it may be, hundreds of thousands of lives; a war which will beggar our commerce, check our industry, decimate our cities, dismember our households, ingulf our beloved, and wring our hearts with unspeakable anguish. What shall we say, in view of these horrors? what policy embrace? what course pursue? I know but one counsel in this emergency. One thought is uppermost in my

heart; one word gushes up to my lips. It is hard to say it, in the face of all this tribulation and woe; but I know of nothing better: that word is, Onward! — onward, while a dollar remains in our treasury, and a regiment in the field! — onward, with due caution, but with unabated zeal and indomitable hearts! We have girded on our harness; and cursed be he that would bid us put it off until one of two issues arrives to our arms, — until we have quite conquered the enemies of our peace, and driven rebellion into the sea, or we ourselves are so far conquered as to have no means and no hope left; until it becomes evident, and is forced on our reluctant minds, that we have undertaken an impossibility, and are fighting against God, and must needs submit to his decree and the stronger foe, and accept the rupture of the Union as the bitter end and the heavenly doom! There are times when the cry of peace is the voice of treason, frightful and hateful as war ever is. Precious is peace; but liberty and right are more precious still: and liberty and right are at stake in this contest, — the liberties and rights bequeathed to us by our fathers, and bought with their blood. For certain it is, that if we fail to conquer the rebels who have lifted their parricidal hands against the common mother of us all, the National Union, they will eventually conquer *us*, and exercise a deadly dominion over us, if not by force of arms, by the surer weapons of political intrigue, — by insidious tampering with our commerce, by fell collusion with traitors on this side, by sowing dissension in our counsels and strife in our ranks, till province after province is

added to the new confederacy, and, piece by piece, what remains of the old Union is broken up. For the hydra of Secession is a monster that will not cease to ravage and destroy until the life is burnt out of it by the searing application of loyal arms. There will be no drawn game in this warfare: our only alternative is to conquer or succumb.

The cry of peace has been raised, here and there, by those whose political prospects or material interests are imperilled or impaired by the war. What would they have? what kind and conditions of peace would they propose? Shall the North — that is, the Federal Government — lay down its arms, and say to the rebels, "We have erred: we repent. Go your way; do what you will: we oppose you no longer"? If such be their meaning, let them declare it, and see how many they can draw to their side. But no: they would have a convention for mutual adjustment. Suppose the convention assembled: what is there to adjust that the Constitution has not adjusted? Will the South accept that arbiter? The seceding States have already disowned it. For the North to offer more than the compromises of the Constitution would be saying to the rebels, "We submit to your will: put your feet on our necks." May I never live to see the day when that concession shall take effect! Better a war of extermination than such adjustment.

The demand for peace has hitherto, so far as I know, been confined to the North, the party aggrieved and assailed, — the party acting in defence of the Union and the Constitution. It must come from the other side

of the Potomac; the cry must go up from the ranks of Secession, and be accompanied by return to the old allegiance, — before our warfare can be accomplished.

Great are the difficulties attending this struggle for nationality. There never was a conflict so complicated and embarrassing as ours. Had we only the known, declared, and open enemy to encounter, our task would be comparatively light. But we have to contend with secret foes; our enemies are partly those of our own household; Treason lurks in our own ranks, in league with Rebellion outside, and furthering its cause. If we fail at last, it will be the treachery that walketh in darkness, not the destruction that wasteth at noonday, to which we succumb.

But we will not admit the thought of failure, with such an overweight of means and forces as falls to our side, with such issues as hang on our success, — the interests of civil society, the cause of order the world over, the cause of liberty for all time. Let us rather think, with such interests at stake, that Nature herself is in league with us; that the stars, in their courses, fight on our side; that humanity travails with the burden of our victory. Let us think that the shades of our fathers look solemnly down on this solemn struggle to preserve what they gave. And, with these, let our piety connect the more recent memories of those who have fallen in this campaign, — the proto-martyrs of our cause. High among these, shines the honored name of Lyon, than whom no braver ever led the van in the field of death. He sleeps well: his memory is blest.

"There is a tear for all who die,
A mourner o'er the humblest grave;
But nations swell the funeral cry,
And Triumph weeps, above the brave."

And so let the day of public humiliation be to all the people of this Union a day of new consecration and new hope. May He who weighs the nations in his balance find this nation true to his word, and trusting in his name, in war as in peace! May those who gird on the harness of battle wear it without boasting, but with cheerful courage and unfaltering trust; and, when in due season we shall put it off, may our boasting be not in ourselves, but in God, who giveth us the victory!

THE

DAY OF NATIONAL PRAYER AND FASTING,

SEPT. 26, 1861, APPOINTED BY THE PRESIDENT ON THE RECOMMENDATION OF BOTH HOUSES OF CONGRESS.

FROM A SERMON OF THE REV. DR. E. L. CLEAVELAND, NEW HAVEN, SEPT. 1, 1861.

"This kind goeth not out but by PRAYER AND FASTING," said our Lord on a trying occasion; and the words are applicable to the church in all periods of time. Religious fasting is a natural method by which the soul expresses its grief for sin. Even the heathen Ninevites, when deprecating the judgments of God, kept a rigorous fast. On the murder of Abner, David said, "God do so to me and more also if I taste bread, or aught else, till the sun be down;" and again it is recorded, he "humbled his soul with fasting." Daniel "set his face to seek the Lord by prayer and supplication with fasting." Nehemiah "mourned certain days and fasted." Anna "served God with fastings and prayers." "Four days ago I was fasting until this hour," said Cornelius; when God declared to him, "Thy prayer is heard." Paul and his brethren "approved themselves as ministers of God, in labors, in watchings, in fastings;" and our Lord, in preparation for his ministry, fasted forty days.

As our Chief Magistrate has appointed a day for national fasting and prayer in behalf of our country in its present sore trial, the occasion seems a favorable one for considering the PROPER MANNER of keeping a public fast.

1. The *entire day* should be given up to the duty. It is a *day* of humiliation and prayer, and not merely the hour spent in the sanctuary. To meet the occasion and avert the threatening danger, we need a greatly deepened sense of our own exceeding sinfulness; we need to be filled with the spirit of prayer and the power of faith; and need the entire day devoted to self-inspection and abasement, to repentance and supplication. It will greatly promote this frame of mind, if the cares and engrossments of business be laid aside, and we are permitted to feel that we have nothing to do on that day but to fast and pray, and prostrate ourselves before God.

2. To keep a public fast acceptably, we must not neglect *assembling ourselves together* for humiliation and worship. A public fast must have public meetings and services. God can indeed see and hear in secret; but in this, as in other duties

of religion, he appeals to the social principle of our nature. Thus he summoned his ancient people: "Sanctify ye a fast, call a solemn assembly, gather the elders and all the inhabitants of the land into the house of the Lord your God, and cry unto the Lord." God would have us *mourn* by churches, just as he would have us rejoice and praise by churches. He calls for "all the inhabitants of the land" to assemble for prayer; the old and the young, even little children, are to be gathered in the sanctuary. Surely, if any one class has more to gain or to lose by the present conflict than another, it is the rising generation. To them belongs that great future which, if we succeed, is to open in unprecedented blessings on this western continent; or that night of ages which, if we fail, is to settle down on this fair hemisphere. Whether their day of life is to be passed under the bright sky of that glorious nationality which protects all its subjects and all their interests from foes without and traitors within, or under the black banner of an intolerable oppression; whether they are to walk these plains and hills with the firm tread of freemen, or with the timid step of bondmen; amid scenes of peace and prosperity, or of war and poverty, must depend upon our success at the throne of grace. Have not our children, then, a profound interest in this coming fast? Ought they not to assemble with us in the sanctuary, and take part with us in the humiliation? We trust each house will be filled with a great congregation of the old and the young, bound as by one impulse and under a common burden, before the footstool of divine mercy.

3. There must be *actual fasting*. It is a mockery of God to pretend to observe a fast and yet not abstain from food. If we profess to keep the fast, we should do so in good faith; and not, by presenting ourselves in one manner in public, and another in private, provoke, instead of turning away, the righteous displeasure of the Most High.

4. We must *mourn and pray in private* as well as in public. Our devotion must not be confined to public meetings. Every *family* must mourn apart; for what have not families to suffer if this rebellion triumph? Every individual too must mourn in secret; let each one seek out some spot where, unseen, he may pour out his soul before God for himself and his country.

5. The most essential part of a true fast is the *sincere humbling of ourselves before God for our sins*. This embraces our sins as individuals, as a church, and as a nation; it demands not only a survey of the present, but a review of the past. All our sins of every date and of every kind are known to

God, and have something to do with the calamities we are suffering. We are suffering to-day for national sins all along the path of our history, and it becomes us to bring all these things into remembrance before God. Let it be observed too, that there can be no genuine humiliation for sin, if we are thinking only or mainly of other men's offences: if we devote ourselves to the rehearsal and denunciation of crimes not our own, we do but reënact the part of the boasting Pharisee, and provoke the anger we desire to avert. We are not to exalt, but to humble ourselves. Whatever sins we confess, it must be in the spirit of self-abasement, not of censoriousness. Let us not forget that, despite the pretended secession of states, we are still one nation; we acknowledge no dismemberment. We appear before God on this fast as one people humbling ourselves for all our national sins, whenever or wherever committed. One class of offences abound in some parts of the republic; in other parts, a different class; but all of them belong to the one nation we call our country. All of them contribute to the injury and disgrace of that nation; and all are to be confessed and bewailed as a part of our national sin and shame. There may be particulars in which it is right for us to defend ourselves from the aspersions of men against whom we have done no wrong; but on this day of fasting we stand before the bar of God, in whose sight the heavens are unclean, and how much more the human heart! In his presence our holiest things require purifying; our repentance must be repented of, and our very tears of sorrow need washing again. The great object of this appointment is to propitiate the divine favor; but this is impossible, unless He who looks on the heart sees that we are truly and deeply humble in view of our personal and national sins.

Never since our fathers fasted and prayed amid their desperate struggle for national independence, have we had so much reason to humble ourselves before God as at the present moment. When I recall the heaven-provoking sins which, as a people, we have been accumulating against ourselves in the past years of our existence, when I think of the rapid increase of every species of crime in all parts of the land, and when I reflect that God is just, and that his justice can be executed upon nations only in this world, I confess to a fearful misgiving as to the scenes about to open upon us. Whether this be not the beginning of a judgment which shall consume the land until the people shall know and acknowledge that there is a God in heaven who ruleth in the earth, and who will be had in

reverence of all his creatures, is a question which only He can determine. That the cause for which we are contending is a just one, I have not a doubt. I can and do pray for it with a full and unwavering heart. I believe it to be the cause of good government, humanity, and religion. Even should our enemies triumph over us, it would be no proof that they are right and we are wrong on the questions now at issue. So triumphed Egypt over Israel, Nebuchadnezzar over Judah, Papists over Huguenots, Russia over Poland, Austria over Hungary, but not because the right was wholly with the victors, and all the wrong with the vanquished. God has wise ends in permitting these things. And how do we know that our impenitence and unbelief are not imposing upon him the necessity of humbling and distressing us still more? It is in vain to talk of our twenty millions, of our vast resources of money and means, of our indomitable energy and invincible prowess. The panic of one sad day should teach us how our pride and power may be humbled. Panics are as truly God's instruments in frustrating the purposes of man as pestilences, and we have no adequate defence against them, except in the protection of his shield. Let us not then put our trust in armies, or in generals, but appeal rather to Him who holds these mighty agents of destruction in the hollow of his hand. HIS FAVOR IS ABSOLUTELY ESSENTIAL TO OUR SUCCESS. If we think to crush this rebellion without his aid, we shall find ourselves wofully mistaken. And if we think to secure that aid without humiliation and prayer, we shall probably discover the error too late to escape its ruinous consequences. *With what unanimity then, with what earnestness and solemnity, with what humility and godly sorrow, with what fervent and believing supplication ought we to keep the appointed fast.* May it be kept as never fast was kept here before. May the sun of that day look down upon the entire people mourning, weeping, and confessing their sins, and pouring out their hearts in prayer to God in behalf of their country. Then will our offerings go up as sweet incense, and he will remember us, and his ancient mercy to our fathers, and turn again and save us.

*** Copies of the above may be had of the AMERICAN TRACT SOCIETY, 150 Nassau-street, New York. The Society also publish The Soldier's Camp Library, Soldier's Pocket Library, Cromwell's Soldier's Bible, and Tracts for Soldiers in English, German, and other languages.

CHRISTIAN PATRIOTISM.

BY

WILLIAM ADAMS,

PASTOR MADISON SQUARE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, NEW YORK CITY.

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This Sermon,

PREACHED ON THE 22D OF FEBRUARY, 1863,

IS PUBLISHED BY REQUEST.

12455
Hon. R. C. Winthrop
Accept. Mar. 9, 1863

CHRISTIAN PATRIOTISM.

1. I was glad when they said unto me, Let us go into the house of the Lord. 2. Our feet shall stand within thy gates, O Jerusalem. 3. Jerusalem is builded as a city that is compact together: 4. Whither the tribes go up, the tribes of the Lord, unto the testimony of Israel, to give thanks unto the name of the Lord. 5. For there are set thrones of judgment, the thrones of the house of David. 6. Pray for the peace of Jerusalem: they shall prosper that love thee. 7. Peace be within thy walls, and prosperity within thy palaces. 8. For my brethren and companions' sakes, I will now say, Peace be within thee. 9. Because of the house of the Lord our God I will seek thy good.—PSALM CXXII.

I SEE not how any man of ordinary sensibility can read this sacred ode, intelligently, or hear it chaunted as a church psalm, with a full comprehension of its origin, import, and use; recalling the scene as it was, on a bright Sabbath of the spring or summer the tribes of Israel coming down from the slopes of the mountains round about Jerusalem, and coming up from the glens of the vine and the olive, flowing together in their multitudinous processions, towards their sacred city and the House of God, singing aloud in the open air, fragrant with the scent of the rose, and musical with the hum of bees; joining in full-voiced chorus as the gates were passed—"Our feet are standing within thy gates, O Jerusalem—whither the tribes go up, the tribes of the Lord, to give thanks unto the name of the Lord"—I cannot see how one can catch the full inspiration of such a scene, and such words, without having his eyes suffused, and his heart dilated with high and grand

emotions. When we analyze the psalm itself, we find it embodies two great sentiments—*Religion* and *Patriotism;* or, to express the truth more accurately, these sentiments which, under analysis, appear distinct and several, are here combined and blended into one great emotion of *religious patriotism;* the love and worship of God promoted in the hearts of Israel's tribes by the memory of what God had wrought for their country; and that country made a thousand-fold dearer to them all because it was the seat of the house of the Lord their God; the abode chosen above all others upon the earth for the display of his majesty, and justice, and mercy.

It is because of this union of sentiments, each so sacred and essential, the love of God and the love of our country, harmonized so perfectly into one feeling, that I have chosen the psalm for use and instruction on the present occasion, believing that it has been preserved in the treasures of inspiration, not as a dead relic of a dead and forgotten generation, but as an incitement and an expression of those high-toned emotions which ought to characterize us all as *Christian Patriots.*

For the selection of this topic on this particular day I am indebted to an association of thoughts which scarcely needs a public mention. This twenty-second day of February is immortalized in our national calendar as the birth-day of that great and good man who, by common consent, is recognized as the father of his country—the first President of our Republic, the founder and the representative of our free institutions. It is no common eulogium on such a man, that you cannot speak of his magnanimous patriotism, nor recall his words of warning and wisdom at the beginning and at the end of his public services, more especially the "pathos, grandeur, and parental love" of his farewell

address, when, like Moses at Pisgah, with a bright vision of the future of his country, he gave his Deuteronomic counsels; you cannot do this without consciously or unconsciously framing a lesson, the very best for the times through which we are now passing.

I have not forgotten that the best and happiest association with every Sabbath day which comes to us is, that it commemorates the resurrection of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, the foundation of all our hopes, the earnest of our own victory over death, the pledge of an immortal redemption. I have not forgotten that it is my solemn charge to watch for your souls, whatever your circumstances in this life, with reference to the life to come; making known "Christ in you the hope of glory; whom we preach, warning every man, and teaching every man, that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus." May my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth if I ever make any theme paramount to this chief commission of a Christian minister.

But, when I think again that he who has determined to establish a kingdom of his own upon the earth—a kingdom whose brightest regalia are righteousness, and love, and joy—a kingdom for whose coming we are taught to pray every morning and evening of our lives; when I remember that He who has ordained the end has also ordained the means and the instruments; that if there is to be a church in the world then there must be a world continued and established, to be at once the theatre of its action, and the subject of its power; that a prosperous, social state, with all the elements of happy civilization, just laws, established order, government gentle, but strong, is not only a result wrought by religion, but the opportunity for religion to develop itself and work unmolested and

unhindered; that the chief evil attendant upon all systems of despotism or states of anarchy and revolution, is, that they accumulate obstacles in the path of Christianity, and that the grandest result of all true liberty is, that, under its auspices, the Word of the Lord has free course, and is glorified; that the Gospel is preached with greatest success, and the churches thrive, and multiply, when the civil power is so administered that we can "lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty"—as I take into view all these facts and truths, then patriotism becomes impregnated with a new motive, redeemed from all association with that cheap and vulgar quality which is so much eulogized in vapid declamation, and wedded to religious ideas, learns to sing as in the psalm before us, "Because of the house of the Lord our God I will seek thy good."

If I have not greatly misjudged, no topic could be more appropriate just now than this—"*Religious Patriotism.*" Our love of country, in this time of trial and peril, needs to be invigorated and exalted by that class of motives which can be drawn only from our religion.

At this very hour we are passing through scenes, which, for suffering and terror, we had supposed belonged only to the historic past. The sea has "wrought and is tempestuous." We are engaged in what has always been regarded as the saddest of all national calamities—a civil war. No Roman general, victorious in civil strife, ever received a public ovation such as was allotted to him who conquered a foreign foe; since, in his case, the success of duty was best honored by sad and reverent silence. Things which we have read of with pale lip, as occurring in other lands have actually come upon ourselves, and men's hearts

are failing them for looking for those things which are coming to pass. Thoughtful men fear more than they utter. From causes which I need not attempt to describe, multitudes have fallen into despondency and gloom. Should this temper become prevalent, it would realize at once the worst mischiefs that ever have been imagined. What is needed now is a generous cordial of confidence and hope, stimulating the body politic into a state of tonic life, superior to all the depressions and dumb agues of temporary and local causes. And this can be administered only in one way. We need, at this moment, a large infusion of religious patriotism. We need to be lifted up to loftier conceptions of our nationality, as related to the Providence of God in the progress of His eternal kingdom. I fear that too many frame their predictions and shape their conduct from the fluctuations of the Stock Exchange, and the reports of the daily bulletin. We must plant our feet on firmer ground than this, and lift up our eyes to higher objects. The events of a single day are but a brief parenthesis in the roll of historic ages. The stars above us are all in their places; the ordinances of heaven are established in their faithfulness. God is on the throne, and heaven and earth shall pass away before one jot or tittle of His Word shall fail of its fulfillment. Far above all that is personal, or sectional, or partizan, oblivious to the petty differences of the hour, burying all subordinate questions of detail, emulating the high-souled deeds of our fathers, possessed of a magnanimous conception of our entire Christian nationality, as essential to the welfare of all races—Saxon, Kelt, African—black or white—to the interests of religion, to all the hopes of humanity in every portion of the globe—to the thousandth generation—far above

and out of sight of all measures mistakes and successes of an hour—up and up must we rise, planting our feet on ultimate truths, standing steadfast and immovable in religious faith "encouraging ourselves in the Lord," as did David amid the perils and disasters of Ziklag, and chaunting our psalm above the voice of the storm. When Paul and his companions in their leaky ship were driven and tossed by the Euroclydon, his object was not to save the ship, but the lives of all she carried. Tossed and driven by this tempestuous wind, our purpose and endeavor is not to save ourselves—each for himself—but to save the ship freighted with such a priceless wealth. No one must be suffered to leave the ship, letting down a boat into the sea, and fleeing stealthily as though they would do something about the bow: no one must be planning how to construct a raft out of the broken pieces of the ship when she has fallen apart: if the ship is among shoals and breakers she must be saved: "better that we had not loosed from Crete and gained this harm and loss;" but let regrets and recriminations go by us now on the gale: every man must be at his post: let us unite our strength and wisdom: try every expedient, undergird the ship, shift her sails, take refreshment after a long abstinence, be of good cheer, and instead of running her aground strike for the deep sea —bear off from dangerous shoals and soundings—make her strong, and tight, and staunch, from truck to keelson, instinct with life, obedient to her wheel; so shall she save all who sail in her, and accomplish the voyage for which she was built, launched, and out-fitted.

There is a patriotism which is chiefly an unthinking impulse, made up of memories and associations local to the soil where we began our existance—a natural affec-

tion, which has in it not one element of a religious quality. Were I asked to describe that love of country which is engrafted upon a religious stock, that compound affection which is illustrated in this inspired ode, used once and intended to be used always in public national worship, I should say, first of all, that it implies an intelligent comprehension of one's country as related to Supreme Providence, to the development of his historic plan, with reference to redemption and his one immortal kingdom. That which we have found to be wise in regard to our personal life and duty—fix the centre from which all acts should proceed and to which all acts should return—we are told is wisdom concerning the life of nations and the dramatic history of the world. This world does not swing in empty space, a dead, iron pendulum; God is its Author, and Governor, and Life, and all things, past, present, and future of our globe, are ordained in the interest and for the promotion of the kingdom of his Son. On a ten-inch globe or map representing our earth, you do not expect to find every lane of a city, or every creek of the country, but only a general outline of the world's configuration. We are not competent to decide upon every event, minute and episodical, how it is related to the grand unity of history, but we do know, because instructed by divine infallibility, that all things were made by Christ and for Christ; that he who ruleth among the nations lifteth up one and casteth down another, with reference to that kingdom which is everlasting and to that dominion which endureth throughout all generations. It is the root and foundation of all our belief, that all the scenes of life's theatre are shifted with reference to the one drama which defines the object of the world's creation. It is on this

root that our patriotism is grafted, and from this vital sap that it draws its sustenance. The love of our country grows intense when we measure our nationality as related to that kingdom of Christ, which is paramount, permanent, and universal. The Bible, in its historic parts, instructs us how the true life of all nations, from the beginning, was ordered in connection with the advent of Him who was the Desire and Hope of the world. This historic chain was not broken when revelation was closed, nor was Christ's rule over the nations terminated, when the pages of the Apocalypse were ended. He reigns now—and will reign forever. And this land of ours—its peculiar nationality—both are dear to us, more dear than words can express, because the product of historic forces in which we see and adore the hand of our Lord. To enhance the estimate of our nationality—we would repeat the brave chronicles of the past: we would lead you through the long galleries of recorded events, good and great: recall reformations and revolutions which had a soul in them because born of love and duty and right: we would tell of up-heavings in the old world, of religious assertions and religious liberty: our own continent shut out and reserved till the right crisis: the exodus of our ancestry inspired and guided by an educated religious conscience: of the melting away and disappearance of savage tribes—the possession of a new hemisphere by a new order of men: of a church ransomed and free from all political alliance—a church reformed and untrammeled in soul and limb: of liberty regulated by law: of institutions established by the people for self-government, self-protection, and self-improvement: we would repeat the old but never stale or wearisome story of the Constitution, the Union, our

great and blessed nationality; and as the fire kindles at the memories of the past, and the hopes of the future—hopes identified with civilization, liberty and religion throughout the earth—hopes which are the fruits of a long, long and patient growth—the purchase of a vast and costly price—standing on this high summit—we find no place, nor possibility for despondency; in possession of such a heritage, there cannot be a thought of throwing it away, or allowing it to be torn from us, or pausing to ask what it is worth, for it is above all price—and so our patriotism, inspired and interpenetrated by our religion, takes up its cheerful Psalm: "Peace be within thy walls and prosperity within thy palaces—because of the house of the Lord our God I will seek thy good."

And it is in this connection, in this chain of Providential events, that we would religiously recall and honor the name and services of Washington. We deprecate everything which approximates to hero-worship, or exalting man as our trust and law; but we would shun also, with earnest care, everything like indifference to the gifts of God, especially the lives of men good and great, men of Providence, as they may be called, designed to be lights in the world, and safe interpreters of duty. Here is a name identified with our nationality; a name which never can be divided and subdivided into parcels to be distributed among dismembered States; the common property of the whole nation, and the symbol of that spirit by which our nationality must be preserved and perpetuated. We cannot recite the story now in detail; our children know it already, and their children and children's children will not forget it; for in his life and services, history had reached a new

epoch—humanity a new development. I have said already, that a recital of what he was, and said and did, was in itself, a discourse for the times. The story of his peculiar training, the qualities of the stripling foreshadowing the virtues of the man; his preservation from dangers for a signal service for his country; exemplifying the true republican virtue of the olden time, offices seeking him and he never seeking office for himself;—honest, patient, and magnanimous, emulous of saving the country rather than winning the fame of a brilliant soldier; sure to win by Fabian wisdom, rather than risk everything by hurling a column on needless danger: practicing self-control greater than the taking of cities, when misunderstood and well-nigh sacrificed by military rivalry and political cabals; showing Christian greatness in a willingness to serve rather than an ambition to rule; instructing the country at the beginning and at the end, as one who believed and felt it that their dependence was on divine Providence, and that the foundations of our institutions were laid in morality and religion; emphasizing with the voice of a Hebrew Prophet, or Christian Apostle, the philosophic truth, that the former could not exist without the sanctions of the latter: warning, first and last, against party spirit, and sectional jealousy, and geographical preferences; entreating, as a father doth his children, each and all, by mutual forbearance, to study the things which would edify the whole;—as all this passes in review, we feel the glow of an assured confidence that the lesson of such a life was never intended for an hour, then to be swallowed up in chaos, for it is a sign and pledge of a future deliverance and greatness, the model of a future conformity. Nor can any man recount a tithe of such a record,

without exclaiming, Oh, for one day of such a spirit now: oh, for one pulse, strong and brave, throughout this whole land, of that true, loyal, "sweet, cherished, hereditary" American sentiment which filled his honest heart: one more Farewell Address, inspired by wisdom and love, and listened to by all the people throughout all our borders, in reverent gratitude, ere he passed from the sight of man.

"Being dead he still speaketh:" and the gift of such a Moses, is itself a pledge for the ultimate triumph of those principles which were represented and inculcated in his life. We delude no man with the false promise of a smooth, speedy, and easy vindication of our nationality. Every reason have we to suppose that it will be with us as with the people of Israel, in their education for their high destiny. They expected a quick and a short passage into the land of promise. So have we. They were impatient of obstacles and murmured aloud because of delays. So have we. They were to be forged and hammered into shape and strength. So are we. There are enemies, many and strong, hanging on our flank and rear; there is a sea, deep and wide, stretching itself across our path: Miriam and Aaron, the brother and sister of the nation's head have proved disloyal—detaching themselves from their true leader: the High Priest himself has joined in with idolatries by which a host have been seduced: Korah, Dathan, and Abiram have incited a multitude of the people into bold rebellion; the waters which once were for refreshment have been turned into bitterness; Balaam has been summoned in God's name to curse Israel: spies have come back bearing an evil report to intimidate and deter, by false stories of giant foes and high

fortresses:—but above us, around us, behind us, is a Power mightier than all, bearing us onwards, always onwards, in suffering and chastisement, onwards still, towards a promise which God has given. That household murmuring and disloyalty will be shamed and punished, even though it be not by the curse of leprosy: that idolatry will be repressed and reformed, and they who have practiced it will be made to drink the ashes of the calf they have worshiped: that rebellion led on by the very kinsman of Moses will be subdued,—some divine branch of sweetness will be cast into the bitter fountains of Meribah: Balaam, in spite of himself, will be compelled to utter a blessing instead of a curse—"How goodly are thy tents, O Jacob, and thy tabernacles, O Israel;" the disheartening report of the spies will be stilled by the strong voice of Caleb, saying—"Let us go up at once and possess it, for we are well able to overcome it;" and though there is between us and the promised possession, a river deeper, swifter, redder than the Jordan; though the time be long and weary, even many years; though Moses and Aaron may die, and many a soldier and priest may not see that for which he has fought and prayed; though a whole generation, because of their unbelief, shall be buried in the wilderness; yet that river will be crossed, and the nation will go over dry-shod, bearing the ark of God with them; and on the other side, the wilderness behind them, that vindicated nationality, that Christian Imperialism will rear its monuments with the very stones taken out of the flood, and all the hills and valleys shall echo the songs of peace and universal thanks to God Almighty.

A very defective notion of *religious patriotism* should I present to you, if I failed to say that the very

tap-root of all Christian love for the country, is a principle of obedience to God. In stating the truth on this part of my subject, we come in contact immediately with that question which defines the issue now before our country in this critical hour, involving not our welfare alone, but inevitably the peace and welfare of the whole world. That question relates to the duty of citizens to the civil government of the country; a subject so important as to be made the topic of frequent teachings by the Christian Apostles. The doctrine of the New Testament in this regard is briefly this: Government is an *ordinance of God.* It comes not by chance; it is not an invention of man; but an absolute necessity ordained by the Almighty, and as such is to be obeyed. The powers that be, are ordained by God, and whosoever resisteth this power resisteth the ordinance of God. So essential to the existence of society is government, in some form, that as religious men, we are required by inspired authority to be subject to it, not only "from wrath" and compulsion, but for conscience-sake—through the power of a religious principle.

This doctrine of the Christian Scriptures is not for a moment to be confounded with those monstrous pretensions of tyrants, which allow no kind of protest against wrong, and forbid all attempts to reform and improve government itself by proper modes. On former occasions, before these convulsions and spasms had seized us, I have, according to my best ability, set forth, in connection with a system of Christian ethics, what I believe are the true principles pertaining to this subject, even those which in certain cases, and we have defined what they are, alone justify and necessitate the substituting of one form of government for another; for

we must all admit that there have been revolutions, and may be again, which are sanctioned by religion. I shall not repeat what was amplified on other occasions, since no one of whom I ever heard, has ever pretended that the government established by the common consent of the country, benignant, just, and gentle, as we have thought it, was so despotic in its sway, so utterly subversive of all the ends for which government is instituted; or so stricken through and through with evils mortal to social order, that it became a necessity imposed by benevolence and religion, that it should be violently overturned.

There has sprung up in our country, and the mischief is not confined to any one parallel of latitude or longitude, a doctrine assuming the specious name of "ultimate convictions,"—which reduced to simpler terms, means the opinions and preferences of individuals,—which claims to be superior to all civil law, an authority higher than the constituted government of the country. Now there is a law of conscience, I speak of conscience well-instructed —a dial set on a true meridian to the sun—which never should be treated with a slight. Whenever human governments require that of any man, which an intelligent, honest, religious conscience pronounces to be wrong in the sight of God, the conduct of the Christian Apostles instructs him how to shape and decide his conduct. If his testimony for truth compels disobedience to the civil authority, he must bear the reproach of God patiently and firmly; taking the consequences of his fidelity,—suffering and death upon himself in proof of his constancy to truth; knowing that his martyrdom will be the means by which that truth will ultimately prevail. But no citizen is justified on Christian

principles, in being a seditionist; striving to overthrow God's ordinance in government, simply for the gratification of his personal preference or passion. For consider, if the will, conviction, partiality of one individual is to be his supreme law; then the will and conviction of his neighbor, which are diametrically opposite to his own, are ultimate authority to him, and who shall arbitrate between them? What shall prevent violent shocks and collisions? Your political thesis resolves itself into this: "every man does what is right in his own eyes." Society is at once dissolved into anarchy, and physical strength alone decides who and what shall be ascendant. We cannot magnify unduly this ordinance of God, a benignant government for our protection; and there is nothing at this hour between us and the surges of an angry ocean, but the constitution which we have accepted as framed, adopted, and transmitted by our fathers. We have launched our earthly all upon the experiment of self-government; believing that governments are for the good of the people, and not the people for the pleasure and profit of the government. There is no need of inquiring into the original condition of the contracting parties; we need not confuse ourselves with theories concerning the sovereignty of the several states; since the people of all these separate communities, with wonderful unanamity, framed to themselves a certain form for the administration of government—"for a more perfect union, to establish justice, insure domestic tranquillity, provide for the common defense, promote the general welfare, and secure the blessings of liberty;" compacted themselves by a solemn agreement and covenant, established it in good faith, and confirmed it by provisions and oaths; a form of government

never claiming to be perfect, but self-adjusting, presenting the mode of its own safe and pacific correction, through the legal and orderly processes of legislation, and judiciary and convention, by which needful changes should be made, and wrongs redressed and improvements accomplished; and surely we shall search long before we find any ethical rule which can justify any party however free and sovereign it may claim to be, breaking away from a compact into which it freely entered, simply on the ground of disgust with the result of a popular election, which they themselves had ordered to be held, and into which they had themselves entered as active participants. The question thrust upon us, is, not whether we can consent to the loss of a certain portion of our national domain; but whether we can, or ought to consent to the destruction of our national existence. If a chain composed of many links is broken in one place, it may be in another, and soon it will be detached into as many parts as there were links in its first composition; and this principle admitted, I see not what can save us from universal dissolution and chaos. I have revolved it much and long, in study by day, and in watches of the night, and I cannot solve the problem, how with such a doctrine of private preference, and ultimate convictions, protruded, allowed and armed, we can ever be saved from the horrors which drenched the soil of France in blood, and rocked it to and fro with explosive revolutions. So that in the providence of God, we are thrown back inevitably upon the maintenance of our nationality, not in pride, or ambition, but for self-preservation, the only barrier which keeps out the waves of the sea; and so our patriotism draws its vigor at last from the law of obedience to God.

All collateral issues aside, biding their own place and time, the question which we are called to settle, not for ourselves only, but for a waiting and troubled world is the possibility of a self-governed nationality. Our failure has been predicted; by many desired; some have laughed at our institutions, saying, if a fox should but scale the wall it would tumble. Meanwhile, with God's favor, our experiment has worked so well, and prospered so wonderfully, that it has reacted prodigiously on the old world; reforms have been begotten of our success; and hoary despotisms have acknowledged and feared the effect of our institutions. There is not a crowned head in the world who has not heard the name of Washington: nor any people struggling for freedom, who have not been cheered and encouraged by our example. Fond hopes would die all over the earth, if the experiment we have commenced should end so soon in disaster. Freedom would shriek in despair, if it should prove that our vast nationality had been dissolved, to gratify the will and ambition of an oligarchy. Every motive of self-preservation, of humanity, of liberty, of religion, compels us to a most earnest expression of loyalty. We must honor government; we must stand firm on our constitution, as the only security of property, freedom, and life. It is no time when a ship is in mid-ocean, and struck by a hurricane, to attempt to take her to pieces and rebuild her on another model. Now is the time to prove the strength of her timbers; and by our brave deportment to show our confidence in our institutions and our God. "Let us gird up the loins of our minds, be sober, and hope unto the end." These inspired words well describe the temper by which, in such a time we should be governed; *Firmness*, *sobriety*, and *hope*. It is sad to see the suf-

ferings, anguish, bereavements, and deaths of the hour: but it makes us sadder still to think of the future, if our failure should entail on coming generations, transmitted hostilities, strifes, and woes. If the principle for which we are called to testify, is good, and right, and religious, then its vindication is worth all which it may cost. The suffering we endure, because of it, is the price we pay in its honor. Our duty is stern and solemn, but how can we avoid it? It is Brutus delivering his own sons unto death, for the honor of law and magistracy. It is Abraham offering up Isaac at the summons of God. It is Jeptha sacrificing his one daughter, kissing her fondly as he consigns her to doom: exclaiming:

> "I could not love thee, child, so much,
> Loved I not Honor more."

It is the Christian law of vicarious suffering, according to which, all which is good and valuable, is made sure only by the endurance of mediatory pains. If great truths are to be wrought out of our history, for the good of the world, the world must see how high an estimate is placed on them, by God and man, in the degree of suffering which is borne in cheerful trust, for the sake of their vindication. Every thing small, selfish, corrupt, must be consumed out of us so as by fire. "As many as I love I chasten," says He who is Lord of the Church, and King over the Nations. We may not prove ourselves worthy of immediate success; the tide which seems to be rolling in and onwards may surge backwards for a season; but truth will only gather force for a later swing; the difference between right and wrong is essential, and God is pledged to the final triumph of one, and the defeat of the other; and we can not have a firmer basis of

confidence than this. Our wisdom, our duty, it is, to draw motives of conduct, not from the fluctuating events of the day, but from eternal verities, the stability of that Kingdom which never can be moved. It were easier to think of swinging the Alleghanies on their base, dividing the continent in another direction; of turning the great rivers of our land about, so as to run to another point of the compass, than to imagine the overthrow of those great laws which involve the ultimate welfare of our race, in the eternal kingdom of the Redeemer. That kingdom is not the mere decoration and support of governments and nations; but governments, nationalities, law, liberty, all things sublunary, are for the never ending and illimitable Kingdom of our Lord. Here, then, have we a standing-place, high and strong. The floods may lift up their waves, but the Lord God Omnipotent reigneth. Parts of his ways he has disclosed, to guide our feet, and confirm our faith. Patriotism is inspired by religion. Because of the house of the Lord our God we seek the good of our native land. We will honor God, and all his ordinances. We will pray for his protection, and seek for his blessing; grateful for what he has done for our fathers, we will seek his favor on us and our children. Guided by His word, cheered by His promises, we will continue our march, hoping unto the end; knowing beyond a doubt, that the world under the power of its Maker is rolling on towards universal love, peace, liberty, harmony, and joy. Nor is this a blind confidence, for God is with us, only as we are with Him. And they who live in later ages of time, will take up the very psalm which we chaunt to-day, and sing it with a thousand-fold better conception of its real meaning; —DELIGHT IN GOD, AND IN THE LAND WHICH THE LORD OUR GOD GIVETH US.

The Reformed Church of Christendom, or the Duties of Liberal Christians to the National Faith at this Crisis of Opinions.

A SERMON

PREACHED BY

REV. H. W. BELLOWS, D.D.

IN

ALL SOULS' CHURCH, NEW YORK,

JANUARY 8, 1865.

BOSTON:
AMERICAN UNITARIAN ASSOCIATION, 245 WASHINGTON ST.
1865.

SERMON.

"For there is no difference between the Jew and the Greek: for the same Lord over all is rich unto all that call upon him. For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved. How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed, and how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher? And how shall they preach, except they be sent? as it is written, How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things." *Romans*, x.: 12, 13, 14, 15.

On Christmas day (a fortnight ago), being detained in a distant city by a necessary journey, I attended a Presbyterian church with an Orthodox friend, and listened to a discourse from a scholarly and intelligent divine, the object of which was to give the fundamental reason for rejoicing in the birth and coming of Jesus Christ. There was nothing new in the doctrine to those acquainted with the standards of the so-called evangelical churches of this country. The sermon set forth the lost and condemned condition of the whole human race, all men by nature being wholly depraved, and justly lying under the wrath and curse of God. The significance of Christ's coming, and the cause of rejoicing in it, was this: that conditions of pardon were held out in his life and death, by accepting which, in faith, sinners might escape their righteous doom, and be admitted to the joys of his heavenly kingdom; failing which acceptance, all men must consider themselves on their swift way to everlasting ruin, the implied fate of the vast majority of all human creatures. The hearers were admonished that most of them, however thoughtless of their coming fate they might be, ere long in the course of nature must die, and, to quote the preacher's own adopted words,

"wake in hell
To find themselves not only doomed, but damned."

The preacher saw neither in God's word, nor in the tendencies of things in the world, nor in history, any evidence that

error, evil, and wickedness were losing, or were expected to lose, any of their relative sum or intensity. On the contrary, they grew, in his opinion, at least as fast as truth and goodness, and were probably destined to take on more hateful and destructive forms and powers, until that day, when the objects of the world's existence being accomplished, the whole drama of life and history should end in an explosion, in which the disciples of Christ should be saved and enter into the triumph prepared for them, and all the rest meet a doom of everlasting misery in the hell to which God's justice had since Adam's fall devoted them. Let me do the preacher the justice to say that this doctrine, strictly in accordance with the standards of the old school Presbyterian church, and not materially different from the doctrine set forth in the articles of every so-called orthodox creed, though expounded in naked simplicity and thorough faithfulness, was not preached without manifest earnestness and tenderness. Nor was there any want of accompanying spirituality. The preacher was evidently an experienced Christian man, without cant or vulgarity, not unacquainted with literature and life, and with those unmistakable tones of sincerity and earnestness which command attention and reverence. I listened, as I always try to listen to all religious services, in an uncritical and unantagonistic frame of mind, anxious to derive benefit and instruction from the ministry of the word. And, putting my own interpretation upon the statements, I was not unblessed, notwithstanding the doctrine, with many wholesome and spiritual suggestions. I looked about before the service began upon the church itself, one of the most costly, decorative and beautiful in this country; also upon the congregation, composed of well-dressed, refined and educated people, with all the usual evidences of interest in their own costume and comfort. I saw evidences enough that the fashions were not deterred from showing their heads even in this awful atmosphere. The music of the organ and choir, choice and attractive, was joined in by the whole congregation in a devout and affecting manner, in hymns which in some of their verses invoked curses upon their own heads. The atmosphere of the place was decorous, serious, and such as

becomes the house of God, and I have no doubt the people were as a body, an active, self-sacrificing and efficient Christian congregation, giving their time, their money and their hearts to the extension and propagation of the doctrines and sentiments of their church and pastor.

As we left the church my orthodox friend, an excellent and skilful physician, whom I respected and loved, said to me with evident feeling, "How can a man, in a state of things such as we have just heard truly described, justify himself in any vocation except that of saving souls?" "The mistake of my life," he added, "is in not having devoted myself to the ministry of Christ. Every other occupation is mean and useless compared with this. What else is there worth doing except plucking human souls out of eternal perdition?" I replied, "If you sincerely and literally believed what you have heard this morning you *would* be a preacher of the gospel!" And so would every other honest and worthy man and woman who believed it. There would be no possible excuse for engaging, under those circumstances, in any of the ordinary pursuits and pleasures of life. What! nine-tenths of the eight hundred millions of human creatures in this world on their certain way to hell; sixty thousand of them daily falling into that unquenchable fire, victims of their ancestor's sin, their ignorance and their passions, there to experience an anguish as terrible as it is hopeless, through the countless ages of eternity, their misery intensified by the knowledge of the boundless, endless bliss enjoyed by their late fellow-mortals in a changeless eternity of joy and glory, proffered to them, in some cases, in their short and busy lifetime, but now lost forever! and yet with this horrible certainty in the mind, be interested in making money, or furnishing houses, or acquiring accomplishments, in marriage and the multiplication of children, in the pursuits of science, the graces of art, the adornments of the person, the pleasures of the table, the amusements of society? What can exceed the measure of indignation due to the hard-hearted levity which could believe its most familiar friends, kindred, neighbors, townsmen — two out of every three in any company however large — in peril of eternal misery, of indescribable and endless sufferings,

under the wrath and curse of an infinite God, with the possible alternative of being snatched from this ruin and secured in the enjoyment of everlasting bliss, by the warnings and importunities of Christian faithfulness, and yet dare to spend a moment in trifling, self-indulgent leisure or pursuit of personal inclinations? And what pursuit is not frivolous, be it learning, wealth, health, virtue, while the salvation of a single soul in such peril is within any man's reach? Do we in times of pestilence, shipwreck, invasion and fire, stop to consult the comfort, convenience and elegance of our appointments, the very lives of our fellow men meanwhile swaying in the balance? But what fatality which the most furious elements or plagues of flesh and blood can invoke, compares for a moment with the horrible fate which is hanging, according to the common standards of the Christian faith, over the whole human race, enveloping us all this very moment in its awful pall? How can men truly believe this, and stop to build elegant churches from which to sound the alarm to sinners waiting for it on velvet cushions, with the light let in through stained glass, and pleasant organ stops, and soft voices singing the dreadful warning in mellifluous strains, and men riding in their carriages to hear it, dressed in costly broadcloth, with wives in silks and furs, and children gaily apparelled? Ought not rather every man and woman who understands and believes this state of things to exist, not waiting on any other interest a moment, to devote every energy of body and soul to arrest the attention, arouse the fears and persuade the consciences of the hapless millions about them, to accept the offers of mercy and pardon according to their interpretation provided in the gospel of Christ? Should not all business stop; all marrying and giving in marriage cease; all science, art, pleasure, costume, luxury be abandoned as sinful, malignant, selfish impertinences, so long as a single human soul remained unconverted, or in imminent peril of endless damnation?

Are we, then, disposed to charge all those who teach and profess to believe this doctrine (excepting the few who in self-denying sackcloth and with sincere abnegation of all personal pleasures and comforts, devote themselves to the

salvation of souls day and night) — are we ready to charge all the rest — the millions of Christians professing this creed, and yet cheerfully and actively engaged in ordinary pursuits and pleasures, enjoying all the common comforts and luxuries of life — with conscious insincerity and hypocrisy? Are we compelled to doubt their honesty in professing so pertinaciously a creed, the logical import and the just inferences from which, they appear so little to appreciate or conform to? By no means. This would be uncharitable, and show a poor acquaintance with the laws of human nature. The truth is, that men's alleged opinions on all subjects, especially those of a speculative character, are powerful and controlling only in proportion to their accordance with the laws and necessary beliefs and experiences which are always forcing themselves upon them in other directions and upon other subjects. Man is a creature of various faculties and many sides. He has faculties of body and of soul; and no theory of the superiority of the soul to the body can quench the eloquence of those bodily appetites which compel him to forget his soul and attend to his body a large part of all his time. He has a conscience, a will, affections, passions. You can build up your theory of life upon any *one* of these only just so far as the others will consent, and any speculative creed or system which is *all* conscience, or *all* will, or *all* affections, or *all* passions, is just so far forth impracticable and inoperative. All human nature is too strong for any single faculty of that nature. Taking the whole race together, every single part of man is always asserting its right, exerting its influence, and so helping to shape human life and destiny. Things may be believed on some dignified authority, or from force of reiteration, or from respect to the past, or from their supposed good effect, which terminate their real influence in the *assent* which is given to them. Not being fitted in the nature of things to the necessities of human condition and human attributes, they are simply inoperative. If the very doctrine we have been setting forth *were really true*, men could not *act* as if it were true. The conduct really appropriate to such a faith is by the laws and necessities of humanity and human society simply impossible. And this is precisely

what makes men willing and able to hear it. It is so contradicted by their instincts, experiences and deeper though unconscious convictions, that as a rule they can only dwell on it while it is being recited, believe it only while they are making an effort to believe it, and believe it at all only in an inoperative and half-real way. In this theoretical manner it is tolerable; because it practically troubles so little their thoughts, practices or pursuits, while it has its own merits of seeming very awful, of costing virtuous effort to receive it, and of seeming conformed to some literal threatenings in the sacred book!

I intend no disrespect towards those who teach these doctrines. They have descended in the middle channel of the Christian church from the earlier times, and are clothed with the sacredness of long use and some past service. The great moral and spiritual issues of our nature — righteousness and holiness with all their blessed fruits and consequences on one side, sin and impiety with all their natural penalties and providential pains on the other — were veiled in these coarse, exaggerated conceptions during the early struggles of Christianity with a rough world whose attention could be attracted and fastened only by stinging and pungent appeals. All the delicate shading of spiritual truth, all the qualifications and related ideas which modify and explain it, had to be sacrificed to immediate effect, and the fair picture of living truth, in all its varied tones and colors, to be shown only in the black and white of the most violently contrasted issues and ideas. Thus God must be either blessing or cursing; man saved or lost; in heaven or in hell; wholly and unmeasureably happy, or utterly and eternally wretched! The dogmas and symbols of Christianity were for ages adapted to the uses of an educated or trained class of clergy, wherewith to operate for their moral and spiritual good on an ignorant and unenlightened laity. Theology was a *theurgy*. The church *managed* the world, and it established its creeds and its usages less with reference to their essential truth than their desired effect. Religion was a sort of politics. Imagine a set of practised but honest politicians assembled at Chicago, or Baltimore, to lay down the platform of the national party for the com-

ing period of reconstruction, anxious to promote the best interests of the country and to move the people rightly, yet with a feeling that every plank in their platform must be squared to popular prejudices or popular comprehension, and you can understand how a considerable part of the doctrines of the popular creeds first found these expressions which now so much astonish and shock us. They were suited to different times. It is still true that the masses of men require their religious interests and the truths connected with them to be taken out of their relations with all other interests and truths and exhibited and urged by themselves, and this necessity involves an inevitable caricaturing or distortion. It is impossible to make an institution of religion, to set apart a special class of men to teach it; to embody it in a creed, and to recommend it by symbols, without overstating or misstating or understating its character and spirit. You cannot teach anatomy except on the *dead* subject, and the dead body instantly loses some of the functions and even some of the forms which anatomy most needs to understand. Therefore it is impossible to teach anatomy under perfectly favorable circumstances, vivisection not being practicable with men as with dogs. Religion to be truly known and understood should be seen only in its actual working in the good and pious heart and useful and devout life of a human being in the full use and development of all his various faculties. You might as well take the blood out of the veins and arteries, and hope to explain and discuss its constitution and functions in the vessel that caught it, as take the pious affections or beliefs or aspirations of a man out of his whole nature and circumstances; his intellect, affections, imagination, will and bodily frame and visible surroundings; out of his physical, social, economical and historical circumstances, and hope to explain religion without exaggeration, error, accommodation, and, in short, without general imperfection in the result. All religious statements are, by the nature of the case, crude approximations to the truth, — hints, suggestions and helps, (sometimes, alas, hindrances) to the true conception of the blessed and infinite truth we aspire to.

There is, however, no other way to educate people but

by means of language, symbols, institutions and usages. We *must* have creeds, or attempted statements of what we believe, whether in politics, society, literature, art, manners or religion. And we *do* have them, however much we may disclaim it. We must have religion taught by a class devoted to it; taught as a separate interest (which it is not), taught as a positive knowledge (which it is not), although this necessity involves inevitable faults of statement, inevitable superstitions of its own, and the dangers which attend all set and formal customs. We must, therefore, recognize partiality and probable error and prejudice and most inadequate statement in our own faith and worship at its *best* condition. And this should make us both lenient and tolerant towards those coarser, and to us now incredible, creeds and opinions which, prickly and stinging as they are in terms, fall into hands so gloved with external familiarity and lined with inner qualifications and modifications that they tear very little the spiritual cuticle.

I am not concerned, then, to abate or refute these dreadful creeds, from pity towards those who suffer from the terrors they inspire. For such is the state of public sentiment towards them, that only the weakest sensibilities appear to be seriously disturbed by them; and indeed to give them any thing of what we might suppose would be their *universal* effect, they have to be worked up at special seasons, known as revivals, with artful skill and contagious sympathy into engines of alarm. Nor do I object to them on account of their mystery. Because they are not credited in the same practical way in which rational truths are believed, they are not destined to lose their place for a long time yet in the creeds of Christendom. It is idle to suppose that the irrational or incredible character of a theological dogma has much to do with its abandonment. The old Catholic spirit, "I believe it, because it is impossible," lives in human nature still. Men know that there *is* mystery in their being and their destiny, and they are not only prepared to expect it in their religion but they welcome it there; and no faith without mystery can or ought to live. I do not object, then, to the *mystery* in the popular creeds. But I object to a great deal of the prevailing religious

teaching of the so-called evangelical churches, that it is drifting far astern of the wants, the ideas and the possible assent of the better educated people of this country, and allowing the most intelligent men in all communities to become secretly skeptical; upholding religious institutions, if at all, for others' sake and not from any need of their own. I think that respect for the past, reverence for the established, and acquiescence in what *has* been useful after it has ceased to be so, has its recognized boundaries; is respectable and becoming, up to a given line, but cannot safely be carried further; and that the time has come when it begins to involve the character of religious teachers for honesty and common veracity to be living and teaching in the presumed faith of creeds which they do not and cannot believe. I allow for the widest latitude of interpretation in theological symbols, and would practise the greatest charity in judging men for modes of faith. But I think it has become a common scandal that the creeds of the churches do not express the real opinions of those who subscribe and profess them. I long, for the sake of common manhood and common veracity and common sense, to see the religious statements and professions of the Christian world adjusted to their interior faith and convictions; to have the actual and lawful interest they take in this world legitimated and put under the sanction of their creed; the actual respect they feel for human nature relieved of the theoretical infamy they assign it in their creeds. I want to see a manly confession that the verbal and plenary inspiration of the Bible is not tenable, and is a monstrous fable; that the doctrine of the Trinity is true only in some metaphysical sense in which honest Unitarians can accept it; that the deity of Christ is a moral and spiritual kingship, not a deity which confounds a created and dependent being with the Infinite Maker of heaven and earth who filleth immensity with his presence. I want to see God's love and providence recognized in nature as well as in grace; outside the church as well as in it; in ordinary life and work as well as in Sunday worship, and in purely religious acts. I long to see the teaching of the pulpit rid of its unreality and become again a fresh, living exposition of present convictions. Then

would religion recover its primitive power and become the joy and pride and glory of our generation.

And, brethren, those who think that honest, immediate dealing with Christian truth would be a destroyer of the sanctities and a letter-down of the doctrines of the gospel are wholly mistaken. The power of the living Christ is now dreadfully hindered by cold, theoretical conceptions of his work of love and salvation. The real, moral and spiritual truths of Christianity in regard to retribution, as you are accustomed to hear them set forth, have they not an awakening and warning influence, with which the old terrors no more compare, than the stories that affrighted our childhood, with our present sense of the dangers and perils of actual life? There is enough in Christianity, after all human additions and false interpretations have been taken from it, to meet all the religious wants of the most craving souls for endless ages! Christ himself, the living Word, is an endless fountain of truth and goodness, of love and power, which is only choked by the superstitious and erroneous creeds that now overgrow it. Make it easy for men to come to that fountain! Take away the thorns and briars that encompass it, and for one that now falls bleeding with an outraged reason, on its brink, to drink the waters of life, ten would walk in the open pathway, lighted by all their powers, to Him who is the only well of divinest truth. The world is kept from Christ by the very creeds that profess to tabernacle and enshrine his presence; and those creeds, by their offensive and irrational character, have driven their antagonists into errors of an opposite kind. Thus Unitarianism would not exist but for Trinitarianism. We really want neither; but only true *Christianity*. The Trinitarian and the Unitarian divide the real Saviour between them; the Trinitarian goes off with Christ, the God, and the Unitarian with Jesus, the man, and both lose Jesus Christ, who is God in man. We had a *God* before Christ; we had holy, spotless *men* before Jesus; but God manifesting himself in the face and life of man, we had not before Jesus Christ; and it is this which is the life and perpetual glory of the gospel. I believe the time has come when liberal Christians (if we must bear that presumptuous name) must recognize the duty

of leading on the church universal to a more honest, brave and frank confession of faith. All the signs of the times indicate a dissatisfaction with the unadjusted relations between men's opinions on other subjects and their religious opinions. This antagonism, or want of harmony, cannot last forever. Science, experience, practice may for a while have one faith, and churches and divines and missionaries another. We may for a while affect to believe on Sunday what without any consciousness of wrong or loss of self-respect, we practically disbelieve and show that we disbelieve on Monday and all the other working days of the week, but we cannot keep it up forever. It is precisely analogous to our attempt to keep alive both our respect for the Declaration of Independence, and our respect for human slavery; their essential incompatibility is ever chafing, and finally wears through all our restraints, and brings about that settlement of which the bloody score is now reckoning, — a settlement in which the Declaration of Independence knocks slavery out of existence as the alternative of being itself destroyed!

It is certain that the science, experience, practical necessities and self-evolving convictions of the world are surely, although hitherto slowly, destroying the harsh, cruel and unearthly creeds that have come down to us from the dark ages, or the infant ages of the church. In England, that intensely conservative land, where errors embalmed in dignity and wealth last longer than anywhere, and lie in unburied state long after they are known to be dead, the time has come when the learning and honesty and practical wisdom of even the upper class, when the clergy and the professors and the literary men and the reformers of wrongs, are openly and at any necessary sacrifice of position and salary and social acceptableness, challenging the creeded statements of the established church. Bishop Colenso may be deposed from his see, or proved to be a heretic according to the standards of his church, but all that does not prevent him from being read and believed, nor diminish his influence, nor weaken the plain truths he announces a whit. In Germany, swaying back and forth from the harshest "orthodoxy" to the most destructive rationalism, there is a clear

tendency in the work of the latest and ablest theologians, to a statement of Christian doctrines which shall be equally clear of all the contradictions and superstitions of a middle age or an early age theology, and of the rash, irreverent or naturalistic views which, under the name of Neology and Transcendentalism, have captivated and led astray so many enterprising but precipitate minds abroad and at home. In this country I will not maintain that the masses are likely to be soon weaned from the popular orthodoxy. But I am persuaded that some *millions* of the American people, sober, thoughtful and well-intentioned people, are thoroughly undermined in the foundation of the faith of their parents; are dissatisfied, afloat and inquiring; are reading scientific books and spiritualistic literature, and trying to find some substitute in ethics or pseudo or real science, for a religion which they cannot longer believe. Now, being fully persuaded myself that there is no substitute for religion, and no religion that can satisfy except the gospel of Christ, I cannot but feel an intense desire to see the faith which we have found so instructive, comforting and saving — that statement of the gospel we call liberal Christianity — largely promulgated, freely offered to the American public, and urged in every way upon those who think that science, or literary criticism, or experience, or the progress of the age, or the growth of the human mind, have disproved or emptied of solid contents, or dissipated in mist, the glorious gospel of Jesus Christ. It is in no controversial spirit, with no desire to disturb any existing faith, or to convert any satisfied believer, be he Catholic, Calvinist or Episcopalian, that I would urge this as the duty of liberal Christians. Nor is it with argumentation and discussion and polemic weapons that I would proceed. It is only by addressing the unchurched, the dissatisfied, the indifferent, the skeptical and those disconnected from any existing organizations, that I would propose to advance our cause; and I would address them, not by disputing old opinions, but by presenting new ones; not by attacking the past creeds, but by simple, affectionate and devout statement of the new creed — that creed which has been stripped of its various disguises and is believed by us to be the original creed of Christ and his

apostles. The old controversy, textual and metaphysical between Unitarians and Trinitarians, has done its work and passed away. The work of destruction and negation is ended. We need now only to build up a broad temple on the cleared foundation, and invite in the passer-by to a faith and worship which needs no recommendation but its own simple, affectionate and devout statement and publication.

Have we not a solemn and urgent duty to our faith thus to make it known? And was there ever a time when it could be proclaimed with such fair prospects of success? Is not public sentiment ripe for it? Has not the essential doing away with slavery removed the principal obstacle to a faith objected to by millions because it was radically subversive of that unchristian institution which found its chief support, next to the cupidity and pride of its beneficiaries, in the superstitious bibliolatry and false divinity of the Southern church and the more ultra orthodox churches of the North?

How can we fulfil our duties in this direction efficiently? The first condition of success is faith in our own principles and opinions as the real gospel of Christ. There are those among us who have lost this faith in a great degree, owing to the slowness of our past progress, the seeming want of adaptation in our system to popular acceptance, and the tendency exhibited by many of our own ministers and people to lapse into an unhistorical and Christless, an ethical, or merely sentimental faith. So when our war broke out, millions, and those among the best educated of our countrymen, had lost their faith in American institutions, in the feasibleness of liberty, in the possibility of restraining the tendency of freedom to run into license and of universal franchise to degenerate through the ignorance of voters, into a perilous no-government! But what an astonishing and wholesome revolution have we not experienced in this respect! What a revival of faith in our national ideas has blessed the common mind of the country! What has become of the admirers of English institutions, of aristocratic grades, of limited monarchy, and an established church, or a limited franchise? What is to prevent as sudden, as general a resuscitation of faith in liberal Christian

sentiments; in the safety of a rational faith; in the sanctity of a simple, credible and reformed gospel creed? This seems to me to follow in a natural order the political and moral regeneration of the country. Our past slowness of progress has been nothing but the unseen rooting of our ideas and principles in the vague literature, the unconscious public sentiment, the uninstituted feelings and sympathies of men. Representing, as our faith does, the real tendencies, moral, political and spiritual, of the age we live in, it has already taken large possession of the inarticulate thinking and unmethodized feeling of society; just as anti-slavery feelings and sympathies secretly and unconsciously occupied the under mind and heart of the loyal people of this country when religious, political and social institutions were all forbidding them to know it, or say it, or even do anything but angrily deny it. Yet when the test came, what was more evident than the thorough preparation of the people for the change which seemed to come without warning and against all hope? I cannot doubt that the day is at hand when the crystallization or institutionizing of the changed religious ideas and sentiments of our country, into churches and liberal external creeds and communions, shall with sudden and vast strides reveal the secret, immense preparation which for thirty years has been going on in the American mind. In what form this new Reformation (for it is nothing less than that), this more Protestant-Protestantism or rather more Catholic-Catholicism, will break out I cannot tell. But I am confident of one thing, — the decay and death of our old Unitarian organization or denomination, deplorable to our pride and grievous to our affections as it will be, cannot stop it, and may even be necessary to its realization. The new creed is perhaps more likely to storm the Christian mind and heart of the American church through the sudden leaping of ministers of the old creeds into the large and liberal teaching of our essential doctrines than through the courage, faith and enterprise of our own people. It would not surprise me in the least to see in five years a thousand American ministers of all denominations re-united in a new organization, animated with the very essence of our own ideas and opinions, but clothed in a more emotional, a less

purely intellectual, a more external and attractive ritual and worship than we inherited. Were the true leader to appear, moved by the spirit of God, — a new Luther or Wesley, — the field for him is white for the harvest; and I see not how he can be far off. Unitarians may take the matter seriously to heart that their lukewarmness, faithlessness in their mission, and deadness to their opportunities, will not thwart the patent purpose of Almighty God, nor drive away from the world the dove that finds no shelter in their cold bosom. A little time is given them to repent of their apathy and cowardice, their neglect of their opportunities, their withholding of their wealth and talents and social riches, of their moral standing and spiritual insight, from the great missionary work of moving the church and the world onward, and organizing their religious ideas on a scale worthy their heritage and their vocation. Five years more of their present stupor and divisions and self-distrust, of the alienation of their laity from the methods of their ministers, of their lack of missionary enterprise, of the falling off in their supply of ministers, of their failure to endow their western colleges and theological schools, of their feeble newspapers and half supported magazines, will finish them as a body to whom the world can look for any great services; end their hopes as leaders in the Christian church, and place some new body in the van of theological reform and spiritual progress.

One more effort to revive the latent life of the Unitarian body is to be made, and if it fails we must fold our arms and hug the memory of a past that was brilliant and glorious in its promise, with our backs on a future we are not worthy to enter and possess. Are we willing to submit to this humiliation and defeat; to this surrender of our birthright? If not, we must wake from our slumbers. We must collect and organize our strength. We must have clear ideas of our duty. We must gather our thoughts, our feelings and our means with self-sacrificing and devout purpose about the duty of extending to the country at large, and with some swiftness and breadth, and on a national scale, the knowledge of our faith. We must begin by establishing, at the necessary cost, literary organs of our

opinions; weekly newspapers, in New York and in Cincinnati, or St. Louis, on the scale of the Independent; papers each edited by the best talents that money can buy; papers so able, earnest, and pronounced so useful, instructive and entertaining that they *must* be read, and that a vast constituency of supporters can be found for them. What if it cost the Unitarian denomination a half million of dollars to establish its necessary organs; to canvass the country for subscribers; to circulate them in every town and village of the whole land, — would it not be the very least its wealth and ability, its light and power owes to the church and the world, owes, above all, to the nation that has just escaped political ruin, and is not yet out of theological bondage? What are our little, starved newspapers doing for our cause, read by less than six thousand subscribers, in a country of thirty millions? And what sort of a representation of our learning, thought, enterprise and taste do they make living from month to month on the unwilling charity of a few pity-taking friends who are not quite willing to see them die of inanition? And what is the circulation of our quarterly journal, excellent as it is, or of the Christian Examiner, a theological and literary journal that ought to be the first in the world? Beggarly both in the support they receive, and with little or no influence that can begin to deserve the name of national!

But next, we need *ministers*, living missionaries of the faith we profess to think the best and truest in the world. Where are they? and why do they not come in ever increasing numbers from Harvard College and the homes of New England full of generous sentiments and free thoughts? For various reasons: 1. There has not been faith enough in our body in its own ideas for the last five and twenty years to fire the young hearts growing up in our fold with the impulse to become its preachers. 2. Such discouragement has attended our progress that young men have gone into other professions rather than into the ministry of our church. 3. Ministers in no denomination spring from the wealthier class and the city population, and Harvard College, a costly institution, has not been able to invite, by its charitable foundations, a very considerable body of students

from the country and the middle rank of life, whence ministers are commonly made. 4. Divisions and discussions involving the very fundamental ideas of Christianity have been pending, which have daunted, where they have not destroyed, the *faith* of our rising young men, and made them reluctant to prepare for the preaching of a faith which might turn out to be no faith at all before their preparation was complete. 5. The general state of the country has been unfavorable to the growth of the ministerial class, and its quality has depreciated as well as its numbers in most denominations. These reasons will suffice. Many others might be given.

Now we want to draw, for the ministers of the liberal faith, on portions of the country that have not been sicklied o'er with the New England subtleties of debate. They lie aside from the practical workings of the great national mind. We want to reach the unfastidious, healthy, hearty natures of the common people, such as heard our Lord gladly at first. We want to get our point of support, our purchase, nearer the centre of the country and nearer the intellectual and moral centre of American life. We want a college for the common people, where education can be afforded to the farmers' sons and mechanics and lumbermen, — sons of Illinois, Ohio, Pennsylvania and Indiana — the very men who are now fighting the country's battles; a college where, without sectarian influence, there shall be no coldness to and no plotting against liberal Christianity, and where those who have free thoughts and new religious ideas may go and cheaply find a liberal education. Such a college we started with the Christians at Antioch. We have it now free from debt, but without a penny of endowment. A hundred thousand dollars would put it in good working order! Two hundred thousand dollars would make it adequate to every want for twenty years to come. Let our denomination give it the endowment it asks, and two years would see it with more students than Harvard College, and every class would turn, I verily believe, fifty young men of earnestness and vigor and faith into the liberal ministry. Such a cheap and glorious opportunity no denomination but our own would throw away. Near by Antioch lives, wait-

ing to spring into large and noble vigor, our Meadville Theological School, now training only its eight or ten ministers per year. It is comparatively useless, because there is no college to train students for it. Make Antioch what it needs to be and Meadville would become by the same motion a really national school of the new theology. Fifty thousand dollars would give it all the additional endowment it requires. This done every thing is done we can do, and we could afford to wait for all other good to grow up out of these movements.

At a recent convention in Boston a resolution was passed calling for a general convention in New York, some time very soon, to organize the Unitarian body for these and other general purposes. Are you ready for such a convention? If you are cold or indifferent I shall expect to find less heart and less interest everywhere else. If you are earnest, willing and prompt to endorse and support such generous plans I shall have confidence to join in the call for such a convention, with some reasonable hope that its action and council would be productive, by dint of full and general organization, of wide and deep consequences. I was made chairman of the committee for calling this council. Perhaps I believe in its ends and objects as thoroughly as any one. If you fully and warmly support it I think I see in the sympathy of many of our most earnest ministers in all parts of the country, West and East, a prospect and a plan for the regeneration of our denominational life, and at least finally test the great question, Is liberal Christianity to be a *permanent* and a *national* demonstration in the great interests of Christ and his church, or is it to dwindle and die of dignified decency in the narrow track where it has hitherto walked? Brethren I have a faith it will live, flourish, conquer, and bless the country and the world. If you, too, possess this faith, let us lay all our hands to the ark of the Lord and lift it high and carry it in triumph over the desert and across the rivers, and set it down in the midst of a promised land of universal enlightenment, universal freedom, and universal faith and charity.

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A fine of 2 ce... ch volume will be incurred for each ... book is detained more than 14 days, and ... ok can be obtained until all fines are settled.

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